

MONTANA PUBLIC DEFENDER COMMISSION
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Yogo Inn, Lewistown, Montana

Minutes

October 10, 2008

(Approved at the December 4, 2008 Commission Meeting)

Call to Order

The meeting of the Legislative Committee was called to order at 8:55 a.m. by Commissioner Mike Sherwood on behalf of Committee Chair Tara Veazey.

Commissioners Present

Mike Sherwood, Ken Olson

Other Interested Parties

Randi Hood, Chief Public Defender

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 17, 2008 meeting were approved as submitted.

Review/Approve Potential Legislation

Commissioner Sherwood reviewed the Commission's proposed legislation from the last meeting. Chief Hood said that the Law and Justice Interim Committee approved both items, but will not provide sponsors. She doesn't anticipate any difficulty obtaining sponsors. Both bills have been submitted for drafting.

Discussion – Legislative Action Plan

Chair Veazey sent a letter to all OPD staff and contract attorneys inviting their participation in the legislative process (exhibit L-1), and several people have expressed interest, both staff and contractors. Chief Hood noted that legislators tend to be more responsive to their constituents than to the agency administration and welcomed their participation.

Chief Hood discussed the large amount of resources spent on minor crimes such as disorderly conduct and driving without insurance. Clients are entitled to representation because these offenses carry the possibility of jail time. She suggested that decriminalizing some of these types of offenses might be a way to control costs.

Public Comment

There was no public comment, but Commissioner Sherwood will offer the opportunity for public comment related to this committee when the full Commission reconvenes.

Old Business/New Business

There was no additional business.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.